

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Reply, claims 1, 3-25, and 27-29 will remain in this application. Claims 2 and 26 have been canceled. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

A partial English translation of published German application DE 39 31 452 A1, which is an equivalent of published European Patent Document EP 0 418 772 relied on by the Examiner, has been obtained and is attached to this Reply.

Claims 1-29 were rejected as being unpatentable over the European Patent Document referred to above in view of U.S. Patent 5,670,235 to Stricker et al. It does not appear that either of these documents has been officially made of record by the Examiner. Proper citation of each of these documents on a Form PTO-892 is requested so that the documents are formally made of record.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1, 3-25, and 27-29 based on the European Patent Document and the Stricker et al. patent relied on is requested. It is noted, initially, that the laminate formed by each embodiment of composite body 1 of the European Patent Document relied on includes a plurality of layers 4, 4' of plastic film, sealing layers 5, 5', and at least one reinforcing layer 3 (Figures 1-3 and 7), 3, 3', 3" (Figure 4), or 3, 3a, 3' (Figure 5). Contrary to the assertion set forth by the Examiner in section 2 on pages 2-3 of the Office Action, the sealing layers 5, 5' do not have a melting point equal to or higher than the melting point of the plastic film layers. Rather, it is clear from both the Abstract submitted together

with published German application DE 39 31 452 A1 in the Information Disclosure Statement filed April 9, 2001, and the first paragraph of the English translation attached to this Reply that the melting point of the sealing layers 5, 5' of the European Patent Document relied on is in fact lower than the melting point of each of the layers 4, 4' of plastic film.

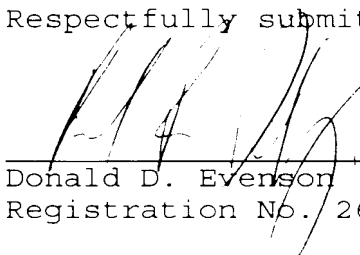
Claim 1, moreover, has been amended to incorporate limitations previously appearing in claim 2, while claim 18 has been amended to incorporate limitations previously appearing in claim 26. Claims 1 and 26, therefore, now specify that a maximum of approximately 10 percent by volume of fibers of the plurality of fabric layers are melted. This feature is advantageous, as discussed, for example, on page 5 of the specification of the present application, and is neither disclosed nor suggested by either the European Patent Document or the Stricker et al. patent relied on. Nothing suggests that any properties of the laminate forming the subject matter of the European Patent Document relied on would be optimized by melting a maximum of approximately 10 volume percent of fibers of a plurality of fabric layers as claims 1 and 18 define. It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 18 are patentable.

The rest of the claims remaining in this application are dependent claims and are patentable as well.

This application is in condition for allowance for reasons discussed above. Should the Examiner have any questions after considering this Reply, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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for

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